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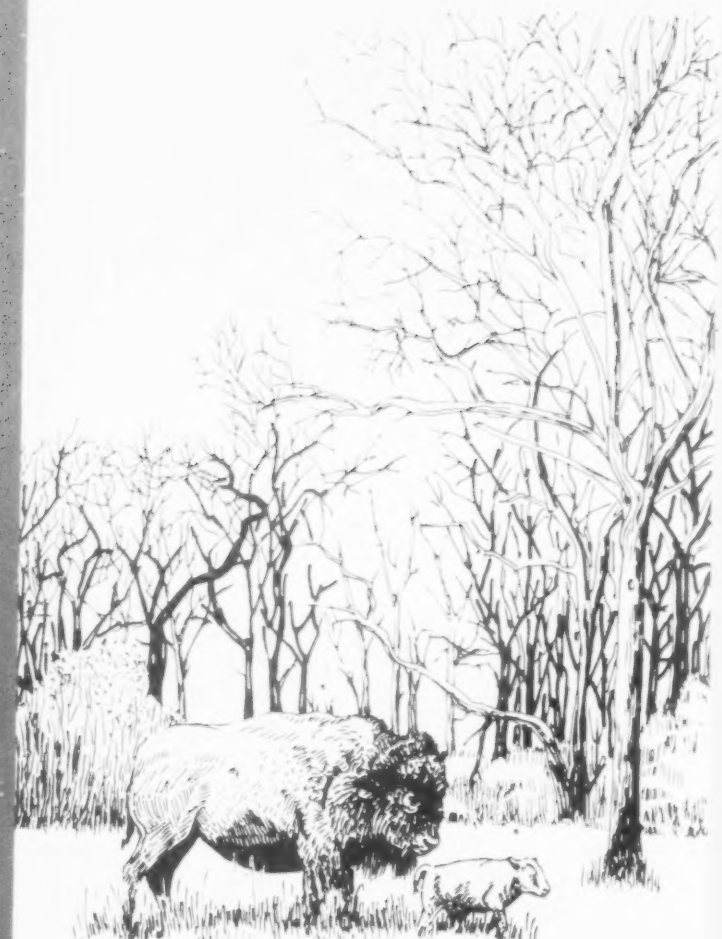
SULLYS HILL
BISON AUTO TOUR TRAIL



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SULLYS HILL BISON AUTO TOUR TRAIL

Welcome to the Sullys Hill Bison Auto Tour Trail. This four-mile self-guided trail takes you through the big game enclosure and gives you the opportunity to see bison, elk, white-tailed deer, prairie dogs, fox squirrels and other native North Dakota wildlife.

The best time to see wildlife is in the early morning or late afternoon when animals are feeding and are most active. We cannot promise that you will see all the animals we have mentioned—wildlife observation depends on luck, time of day, and amount of time you can spend in the area. A pair of binoculars will be of help!

A FEW SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

In order to have a safe and enjoyable experience, and to minimally disturb the wildlife, please observe the following rules and regulations:

- STAY AT OR NEAR YOUR CAR—animals are wild and unpredictable and *can move very quickly!*
- PACK YOUR TRASH HOME WITH YOU—litter is unsightly and can be hazardous to animals.
- DO NOT DRIVE OFF MAIN ROADS—grasslands are easily damaged and wildlife disturbance is increased.
- DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS—wildlife at Sullys Hill finds plenty of food in the area—supplementary feeding of "human food"—chips, bread, etc. is not necessary.
- GIVE OTHERS THE CHANCE TO SEE WILDLIFE—you have seen animals because visitors ahead of you did not disturb them—please give the same courtesy to visitors behind you.

WELCOME TO THE TOUR ROUTE

Tour stops are numbered on sign posts and correspond to the interpretive information contained in this leaflet. Enjoy your visit!

1 BISON WALLOW

Wallows are potholes that may be dry or muddy depending on the season. Bison roll and dust themselves to provide some relief from biting insects. By using the wallows, they create mini-habitats in the grasslands for insects, small mammals and other wildlife. Watch for these shallow depressions along the trail.

2 DEER POND

White-tailed deer are often seen near this pothole, especially in the late afternoon or early morning. Deer feed on buds, shoots and young leaves of many plants. Deer are most often seen along edges of wooded areas and near water.

3 OAK-ASH COMMUNITY

On the north slopes of the hills and in the cooler, dry areas, bur oak and green ash are the most common trees. Temperature, moisture and light favor the trees over grasses-more common in other parts of the preserve. Chokecherry makes up most of the brushy undergrowth, and is a favored food of elk and deer.

4 DEVILS LAKE VISTA

"Minnewaukan" or "Spirit Water" was the original Sioux name for the lake. The Spirit was considered bad because of the legendary drowning of two hostile tribes in the center of the lake. Eventually, the lake came to be known as Devils Lake. It is an important gathering place for migrating ducks, geese and tundra swans. The lake levels have risen and fallen over the years. Today, fish thrive in the lake and recreational use of the area is increasing.

5 CLIMAX FOREST

As a result of higher moisture from two springs that water this valley, the most common plant species here originally were American elm and basswood. Most of the elms have been removed to limit the spread of Dutch elm disease, first identified here in 1981. Their huge stumps are a sobering reminder of the severity of this disease. Watch for deer, elk, and bison in the area, especially in late summer.

6 CLAY EXCAVATION

Beginning in 1868, bricks for the buildings of present Fort Totten were kilned here on the north slope of Sullys Hill and floated across the bay on barges. It was soon discovered that due to limestone pebbles in the clay, the bricks would disintegrate on becoming wet. The entire fort had to be painted to keep the bricks intact. The clay pits can still be seen at the very base of the nearby hill.

7 MEADOW GRASSLAND

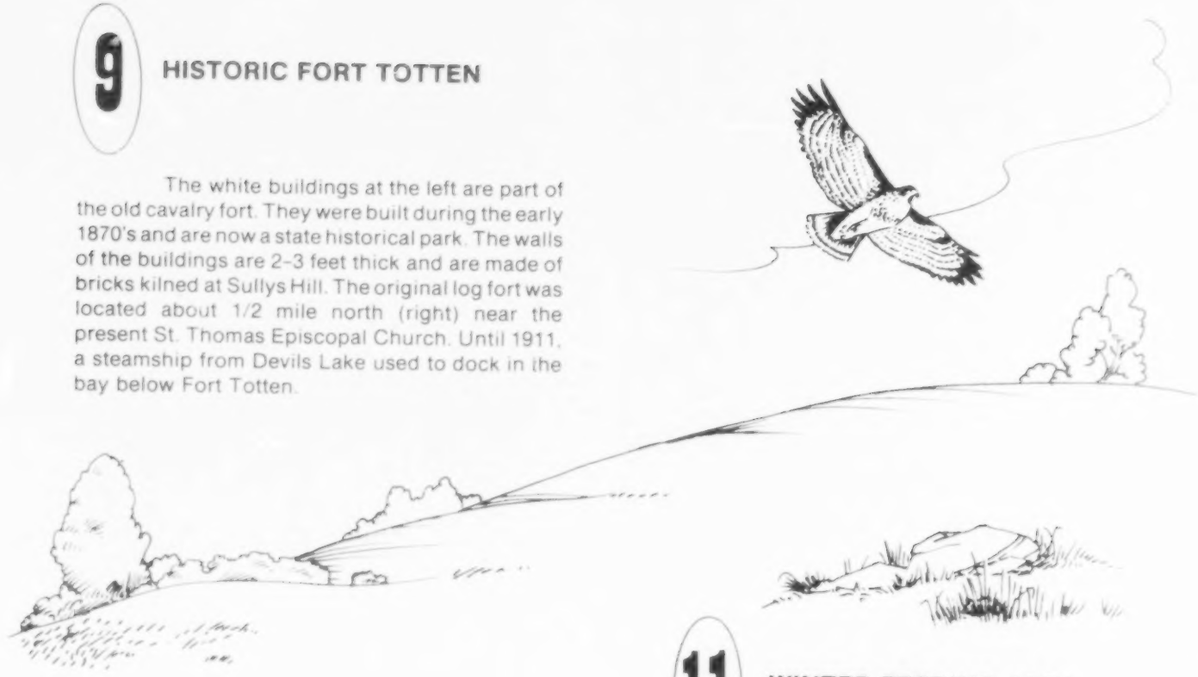
Both bison and elk are primarily grazing animals and utilize these areas for feeding. Patches of buckbrush, part of the meadow "climax vegetation," are mowed and burned periodically to reduce competition with native grasses such as green needle grass and needle and thread grass. This technique gives the native grasses a better chance to thrive.

8 FORT TOTTEN VISTA

At an elevation of 1,735 feet, Sullys Hill rises about 330 feet above Devils Lake and is the highest point in the general area. The hill was named in 1865 for General Alfred Sully of the U.S. Army. FOLLOW THE WALKWAY AT THE BASE OF SULLYS HILL TO THE TOWER AT THE TOP FOR A VIEW OF HISTORIC FORT TOTTEN AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.

9 HISTORIC FORT TOTTEN

The white buildings at the left are part of the old cavalry fort. They were built during the early 1870's and are now a state historical park. The walls of the buildings are 2-3 feet thick and are made of bricks kilned at Sullys Hill. The original log fort was located about 1/2 mile north (right) near the present St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Until 1911, a steamship from Devils Lake used to dock in the bay below Fort Totten.



10 PRAIRIE DOG COLONY

These members of the rodent family feed on a wide variety of plants, eventually denuding the vegetation in all but the edges of their towns. Prairie dog burrows are deep and go down steeply for two or three feet and then slope off gradually for several more feet. The holes are simple, seldom leading out to a second opening. The nest, instead of being at the lowest point, is usually in a chamber that is well protected from any rain water that may run down the burrow. Mounded earth around the entrance serves both as a lookout point and as a barrier against rain water.

11 WINTER FEEDING AREA

The pen at the left is used for storage of hay that is harvested on other parts of the preserve and used as supplemental winter feed. Without winter feeding, big game numbers would have to be reduced considerably to remain within the carrying capacity of the land.

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